4.11 AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES

4.11.1 Overview

The visual resources of an area consist of the features of its landforms, vegetation, water surfaces, and cultural modifications (physical changes caused by human activities) that give the landscape its visually aesthetic qualities. Landscape features, natural appearing or otherwise, form the overall impression of an area. This impression is referred to as "visual character or quality." Visual character is studied as a point of reference to assess whether a given project would appear compatible with the established features of the setting, or would contrast noticeably and unfavorably with them. Existing land forms, water surfaces, vegetation, and cultural modifications are treated as an established part of the setting if they reflect how the landscape was formed, i.e., ecological processes versus human activities, how it functions, i.e., as part of an urban versus agricultural context, and how it is structured ("patterns" of development, such as irrigated croplands versus the natural mosaic of grasslands and woodlands).

Visual resources have a social setting, which includes public values, goals, awareness, and concerns regarding visual quality. This social setting is addressed as "visual sensitivity," the relative degree of public interest in visual resources and concern over adverse changes in the quality of that resource (U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management [BLM] 1986; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service [U.S. Forest Service] 1977). As applied to visual impact analyses, sensitivity refers to public attitudes about specific views, or interrelated views, and is key in assessing how important a visual impact may be, and whether or not it represents a significant impact.

Visual Sensitivity

To assess visual sensitivity, indicators of public concern have been identified for this Project, and their sensitivity rated accordingly. The indicators are listed in Table 4.11-1 and reflect the concepts and methods of several Federal agencies, which treat sensitivity as a function of viewer activity, awareness, values, and goals (U.S. Forest Service 1977; U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service [SCS] 1978; BLM 1986; U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 1980). Certain activities tend to heighten viewer awareness of scenic resources, while others tend to be distracting. People who are golfing, picnicking, or driving for pleasure, are more apt to notice the surrounding scenery than those commuting in heavy traffic or

working at a construction site. Viewer awareness may also be heightened where areas are formally classified or otherwise designated as being of special interest, such as national historic monuments, national and state parks and forests, scenic routes and overlooks, visitor information centers, and wildlife refuges.

Table 4.11-1
Indicators of Visual Sensitivity

HIGH SENSITIVITY
• Views of and from areas the aesthetic values of which are protected in laws, public regulations and policies, and public planning documents. • Views of and from designated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest, including national, state, county, and community parks, reserves, memorials, scenic roads, trails, interpretive sites of scientific value, scenic overlooks, recreation areas, and historic structures, sites, and districts. • Views of and from areas or sites of cultural/religious importance to Native Americans. • Views from national- or state-designated scenic highways or roads, or designated scenic highways or roads of regional importance. • Views from resort areas. • Views from urban residential subdivisions. • Views from segments of travel routes, such as roads, rail lines, pedestrian and equestrian trails, and bicycle paths near designated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest leading directly to them. Views seen while approaching an area of interest may be closely related to the appreciation of the aesthetic, cultural, scientific, or recreational significance of that destination.
MODERATE SENSITIVITY
• Views from segments of travel routes near highly sensitive use areas of interest, serving as a secondary access route to those areas. • Views from rural residential areas and segments of roads near them, which serve as their primary access route. • Views of and from undesignated but protected or popularly used or appreciated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific significance at the local, county, or state level. • Views from highways or roads locally designated as scenic routes and of importance only to the local population, or informally designated as such in literature, road maps, and road atlases. • Views from travel routes, such as roads, trails, bicycle paths, and equestrian trails leading directly to protected or popularly used undesignated areas important for their aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest. • Views of and from religious facilities and cemeteries.
LOW SENSITIVITY
• Views from travel routes serving as secondary access to moderately sensitive areas. • Views from farmsteads, or groupings of fewer than four residences. • Views from industrial research/development, commercial, and agricultural use areas.

High visual sensitivity is assumed to exist where landscapes, particular views, or the visual characteristics of certain features are protected through policies, goals, objectives, and design controls in public planning documents. Visual significance is not always a function of aesthetic appeal. The public may confer visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional (FHWA

1980). For example, unexceptional landscapes along tertiary roads may be particularly important to local residents as undesignated open spaces (Kaplan 1979). Other areas may have regional or national cultural significance, but may not be especially scenic. Nonetheless, their visual character may be considered important due to their cultural value (FHWA 1980).

Three levels of visual sensitivity are defined below.

- **High Sensitivity**. The level of high sensitivity suggests that at least some part of the public is likely to react strongly to a threat to its visual quality. Concern is expected to be great because the affected views are rare, unique, or in other ways are special to the region or locale. A highly concerned public is assumed to be more aware of any given level of adverse change, and less tolerant than a public that has little concern. A small modification of the existing landscape may be visually distracting to a highly sensitive public and represent a substantial reduction in visual quality.

- **Moderate Sensitivity**. The level of moderate sensitivity suggests that the public would probably voice some concern over substantial visual impacts. Often, the affected views are secondary in importance or are similar to others commonly available to the public. Noticeably adverse changes would probably be tolerated if the essential character of the views remains dominant.

- **Low Sensitivity**. The level of low sensitivity is considered to prevail where the public is expected to have little or no concern about changes in the landscape. This may be because the affected views are not "public" (not accessible to the public) or because there are no indications that the affected views are valued by the public. For instance, little public concern for aesthetics is assumed to pertain to views from industrial, commercial, and purely agricultural areas. There are exceptions: some agricultural areas are prized for their open space value, and views of such are highly sensitive. Visual sensitivity is low for views from all sites, areas, travel routes, and sections of travel routes not identified as moderate or high in sensitivity.

Visual Character

The visual character of the affected landscape typically is described in terms of its landforms, vegetation, water features, and the "built" features of the environment. There are three objectives in assessing visual character. One is to identify the types of

features considered to be inherent to the area. Such features are expressive of the prevailing land uses, for instance, in an urban or rural area; they would express the ecological processes in a natural appearing landscape. The more defined the landscape is, e.g., totally natural appearing, purely residential, or consistently rural, the more opportunity there is for introduced features that are not part of the prevailing character to noticeably contrast with those defining the landscape.

The second objective in assessing visual character is to identify patterns or distribution of features that are characteristic of the affected setting. For instance, ecotones might define the distribution of vegetation in a natural setting. Architectural styles or density of housing might be defining attributes of a residential area.

The third objective is to describe the existing quality of the visual resources, which varies inversely with how noticeable incongruous features may be within public views. The current visual quality of the physical environment is described as its existing visual condition. Visual conditions are defined in terms of the four visual modification classes (VMC) that are noted in Table 4.11-2 below (DOT 1998).

Table 4.11-2
Visual Modification Class (VMC) Definitions

VMC	Definition
1	**Not Noticeable** Changes in the landscape are within the field of view but generally would be overlooked by all but the most concerned and interested viewers; they generally would not be noticed unless pointed out (inconspicuous because of such factors as distance, screening, low contrast with context, or other features in view, including the adverse impacts of past activities).
2	**Noticeable, Visually Subordinate** Changes in the landscape would not be overlooked (noticeable to most without being pointed out); they may attract some attention but do not compete for it with other features in the field of view, including the adverse impacts of past activities. Such changes often are perceived as being in the background.
3	**Distracting, Visually Co-Dominant** Changes in the landscape compete for attention with other features in view, including the adverse impacts of past activities (attention is drawn to the change about as frequently as to other features in the landscape).
4	**Visually Dominant, Demands Attention** Changes in the landscape are the focus of attention and tend to become the subject of the view; such changes often cause a lasting impression on the affected landscape.

4.11.2 Environmental Setting

Visual Sensitivity

The EOF is located between the Bacara Resort and Spa on the west and the Sandpiper Golf Course on the east and south, with the U.S. Highway 101 to the north. The Pacific Ocean and beach are located to the south of the facility beyond the golf course.

Some of the EOF structures are screened from the beach and the Sandpiper golf course views by brush and eucalyptus trees. The facility has several tall structures that are taller than the screening landscaping and can be seen from the beach, as well as from the most western end of the golf course (see Figures 4.11-1 and 4.11-2). Some facility structures can be seen from the ocean by boaters. Views of the facility are available from the access road that leads past the facility gates to the Bacara Resort (see Figure 4.11-3). The facility is not visible from the beaches of the Bacara Resort due to the vegetation screening and topography.

The facility is always lit for security and to allow for safe nighttime operation. However, the lighting does not intrude on the residential communities located north of Highway 101 or the Bacara Resort due to the distance, topography, and vegetation screening.

The views from the beach and golf course belong to the high sensitivity classification by the definition in the Table 4.11-1, because of the recreational nature of these locations, and the overall high visual value of the Gaviota Coastal views. In this area, therefore, any man-made or industrial structures would be considered visually dominant (VMC 4 as per Table 4.11-2).

Platform Holly is located approximately two miles offshore from Ellwood Beach. The platform is 80 feet by 120 feet and stands approximately 60 feet above mean water level. It has three decks and is painted a gray-green color. General machinery is located on the bottom two decks. The top deck is used to support well workover operations and includes the drilling rig, hoist and derrick for pulling pipe, crane, gas lift, and shipping compressors. The heliport is also on the top deck. The platform can be seen from many locations, including Highway 101, many public beaches, the UCSB campus, and various public use areas, both in the daytime and at nighttime, due to the required lighting. By the criteria in Table 4.11-1, views of the area near the Platform Holly are defined as highly sensitive.

Figure 4.11-1
View of the EOF from the Beach

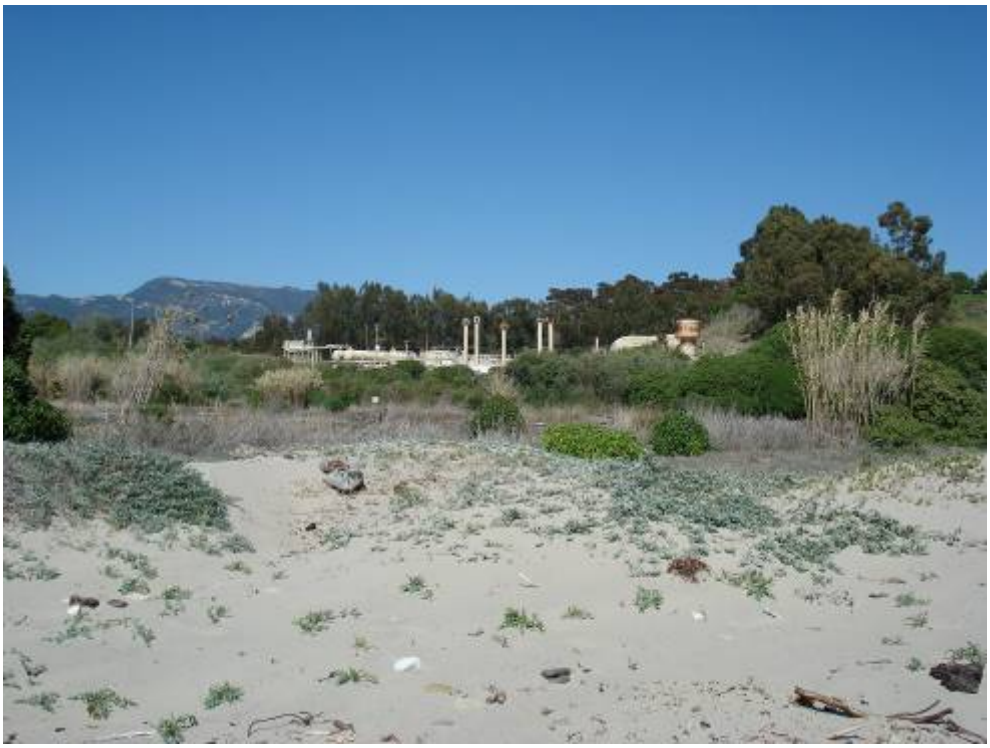


Figure 4.11-2
View of the EOF from the Most Western Edge of the Sandpiper Golf Course

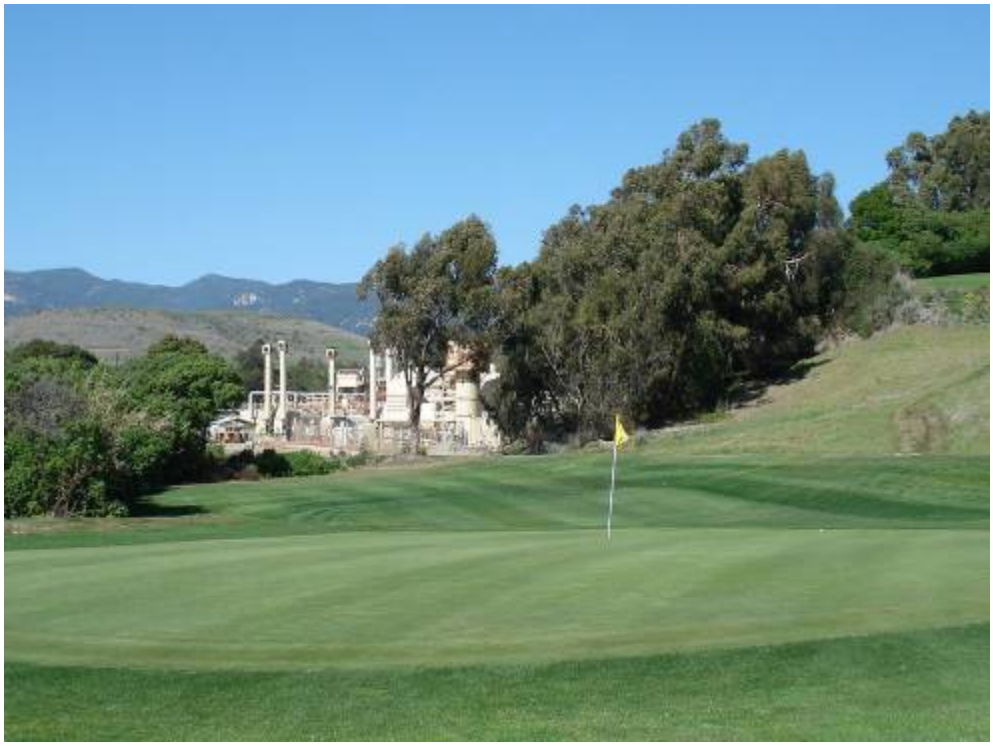


Figure 4.11-3
View of the EOF from the Access Road to the Bacara Resort and Spa

The EMT is located within the Ellwood-Devereux Coast, an area widely recognized for its scenic beauty. The open space areas allow for expansive views of the ocean, bluffs, beaches, estuaries, and mountains. By the criteria in Table 4.11-1, views of the area near the EMT are defined as highly sensitive. Also, east of the EMT area is the Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR), an ecological reserve and scenic coastal area, it is one of 34 reserves in the University of California Natural Reserve System.

The onshore portion of the EMT is located on what is known as the South Parcel of the UCSB North Campus Area. This area is bounded by the Ocean Meadows Golf Course along the north, a eucalyptus windrow and open space on the west, the ocean to the south, and the COPR and Devereux Slough to the east.

The onshore portion of the EMT is partially screened by eucalyptus windrows to the north, east, and west, but it remains highly visible from the nearby beach and dunes and from several other vantage points in the area (Figures 4.11-4 and 4.11-5). Although somewhat screened by surrounding trees, the onshore EMT facilities are a prominent visual feature, with two 42 feet high (12.8 m), 65,000 bbl (10,334 m^3) white metal oil storage tanks, one 24 feet high (7.3 m), 10,000 bbl (1,590 m^3) fire water-storage tank, an unused ballast water tank, security fencing, and electrical lines.

Exterior lighting is provided at the EMT to allow for nighttime operations and security. Lighting is provided by permanent fixtures between sunset and sunrise, and during times of reduced visibility. Light fixtures are located at the pump house, control room, on the road from the front gate to the control room, and between the two oil tanks on the berms. No extra lighting is used at the EMT during loading operations (Grieg 2005). Lighting at the EMT is visible from the nearest residential areas. Adjacent sources of night lighting include the West Campus Family Student Housing at Storke Road, and the existing residence located at the southern edge of the Ocean Meadows Golf Course (UCSB 2004a).

Outside the EMT fenced area is a single 12-inch diameter (0.3 m) crude oil loading line that extends southwesterly from the facility to the beach. This pipe is exposed for much of this distance (Figure 4.11-6). The loading line reaches a beach valve location at the top of the dunes (see Figure 4.11-7); from that point, the pipe is buried below the sand and extends underwater offshore to the barge mooring facility.

The offshore moorings and barge loading operations are visible from the beach and surrounding bluffs. The offshore mooring system of the EMT consists of six mooring (can) buoys located approximately 2,600 feet (792 m) from shore. Each mooring buoy is approximately seven-feet (two m) outside diameter by 10 feet (three m) long. Offshore, there is also a 30-inch diameter (0.76 m) sphere hose buoy and a spar pipeline marker.

Both, EOF and EMT, are located within the Coastal Zone, where scenic resources are protected in laws, regulations, and policies, as noted in Section 4.11.2.

Landscape Character

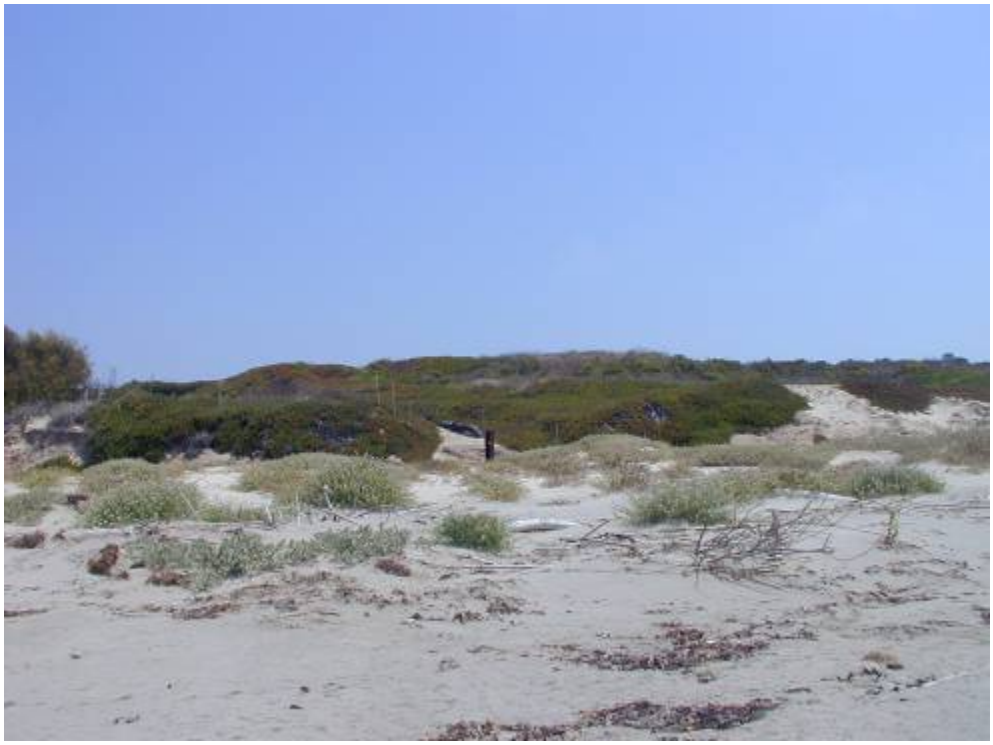
The EOF and EMT are located on the eastern part of the Gaviota Coast that stretches from Coal Oil Point on the East to Point Sal on the West. The coast includes coastal watersheds from the top of the ridge to the ocean. Expansive ocean, island and mountain views are common with miles of remote beaches and interior landscapes to explore. Natural and agricultural landscapes prevail.

Figure 4.11-4
View of EMT Tanks from the Beach

Figure 4.11-5
View of EMT Tanks from Abandoned Road West of Site

Figure 4.11-6
View of the Loading Line from the Beach Bluff

Figure 4.11-7
View of the Loading Line Beach Valve from the Beach



The visual character of this portion of the Gaviota Coast consists of a variety of natural features, including bluffs and beaches, estuaries and creeks, undeveloped parcels, and the Sandpiper and Ocean Meadows Golf Courses. Vegetative cover across the area varies from large groves of trees, shrub land, dune habitats, and disturbed grasslands, to areas subject to human disturbance, such as recreational use. Overall, the character of the area is that of undeveloped open areas, with undulating topography and interspersed groves of trees with few physical structures (UCSB 2004a).

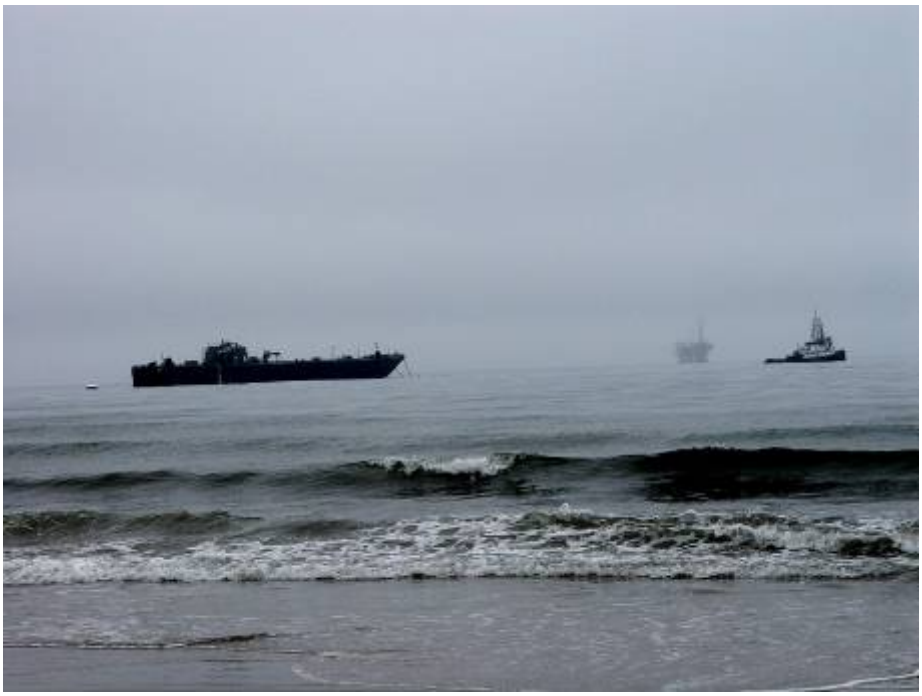
Vegetative cover varies across the area from wetland plant communities and disturbed grasslands to coastal sage scrub interspersed with non-native invasive plants. Pampas grass dominates a significant area of the back dunes, and some of the dunes have been stripped of vegetation due to recreational overuse. The low-lying Devereux Slough is bounded on the northeast and southwest by upland areas, which create a dramatic backdrop to the wetland area (UCSB 2004a).

The area north of the EMT is heavily eroded due to past removal of topsoil to provide fill for the upper half of the historic Devereux Slough, to create the golf course, and to raise development to the north above tidal and floodwater inundation. Drainage improvements include a series of berms and channels, and a partially effective sediment basin that directs storm water into the Devereux Slough. The parcel generally slopes up to the south with undulating topography in some locations due to erosion. Vegetation on the South Parcel includes disturbed grasslands, shrubs, and small trees (mostly in or along drainage courses), and areas that are devoid of vegetation, in part due to recreational use of the site. The area is popular with recreational users and contains willow woodland, coastal sage scrub, and disturbed non-native annual grasslands (Santa Barbara County and UCSB 2002).

The Barge *Jovalan* is 300 feet (91 m) long and 68 feet (21 m) wide, with a loaded draft of 18.5 feet (six m). When moored, the Barge *Jovalan*, along with the tugboat are visually dominant features in the coastal views from the beach and surrounding bluffs (Figure 4.11-8). Depending on weather conditions, offshore views of the Barge *Jovalan* and tug frequently include views of Platform Holly.

All the vessels are equipped with running and deck lights. The Barge *Jovalan* has three sets of floodlights that provide deck lighting and illuminate the water around the barge to a distance of approximately 200 feet (61 m). There are no lights that illuminate the water over the length of the pipeline. There are no lights on the mooring buoys (Grieg 2005).

Figure 4.11-8
View of Platform Holly, the Barge *Jovalan* and Tug from the Beach



The Barge *Jovalan's* lights, which are brighter than the visible lights on Platform Holly, are visible from the beach and bluffs.

When the EOF and EMT were constructed, the Gaviota Coast and Ellwood-Devereux Coast contained numerous oil wells and attendant facilities, remnants of which are still visible. Over the past decades, the business of oil production and transportation has changed dramatically. The expectations of visitors to the area have also changed over the years. Visitors to the Project area now treasure the natural beauty of the area as a respite from the increasing urbanization of the Goleta Valley and Santa Barbara areas. Many visitors, especially those who may not realize the history of oil production in the area, may find the presence of the Project facilities incongruous.

4.11.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as administered by the State of California, applies to this Project.

State

California Coastal Act § 30000 et seq.

Protection of scenic and visual qualities of coastal resources is an issue of high importance, and thus is addressed by several sections of the Coastal Act. Specifically, the Coastal Act is concerned with protecting the public viewshed, including views from public areas, such as highways, roads, beaches, coastal trails, and access ways, rather than views from private residences where no public views are available. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states: "Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas."

Local

UCSB Long Range Development Program (LRDP) Amendment

The Coastal Act Element of the LRDP Amendment includes policies and standards to demonstrate consistency of the LRDP Amendment, and projects implemented under the LRDP, with the statutory requirements of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act (commencing with section 30200). The 2004 LRDP Amendment incorporates the relevant goals and policies of the Ellwood-Devereux Coast Open Space and Habitat Management Plan (UCSB 2004b).

Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan

Policy VH 1: Scenic Views

Objective: To identify, preserve, and enhance Goleta's scenic resources and protect views or vistas of these resources from public and private areas.

VH 1.1 Scenic Resources. [...] The city shall support the protection and preservation of the following scenic resources:

(a) The open waters of the Pacific Ocean/Santa Barbara Channel, with the Channel Islands visible in the distance.

(b) Goleta's Pacific shoreline, including beaches, dunes, lagoons, coastal bluffs, and open costal mesas.

(c) Goleta and Devereux Sloughs.

(d) Creeks and the vegetation associated with their riparian corridors.

(e) Agricultural areas, including orchards, lands in vegetable or other crop production, and fallow agricultural lands.

(f) Lake Los Carneros and the surrounding woodlands.

(g) Prominent natural landforms, such as the foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains.

VH 1.3 Protection of Ocean and Island Views. Ocean and island views from public viewing areas shall be preserved. [..] To minimize impacts to these scenic resources and ensure visual compatibility, the following development practices shall be used, where appropriate:

(a) Limitations on the height and size of structures.

(b) Limitations on the height and use of reflective materials for exterior walls (including retaining walls) and fences.

(c) Clustering of building sites and structures.

(d) Shared vehicular access to minimize curb cuts.

(e) Downcast, fully shielded, full cut off lighting of the minimum intensity needed for the purpose.

(f) Use of landscaping for screening purposes and/or minimizing view blockage as applicable.

(g) Selection of colors and materials that harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

VH 1.4 Protection of Mountain and Foothill Views contains policies such as Limitations on removal of native vegetation and revegetation of disturbed areas.

City of Goleta Ordinances

Development in the city is subject to the City's Inland Zoning Ordinance for those portions of the city outside of the Coastal Zone and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance for

those portions of the city within the Coastal Zone. Following the adoption of the GP/CLUP, the existing Inland and Coastal Zoning Ordinances will be replaced by a single, unified zoning code that includes zoning regulations applicable to inland areas and the coastal zone. Existing city zoning ordinances are not applicable in the context of this EIR, because they will be replaced when the GP/CLUP is adopted.

4.11.4 Significance Criteria

Visual impacts are considered significant if one or a combination of the following apply:

- The Project is inconsistent with public policies, goals, plans, laws, regulations, or other directives concerning visual resources;
- Routine operations and maintenance visually contrast with, or degrade the character of the viewshed;
- The Project results in a perceptible reduction of visual quality or character, lasting for more than one year, as seen from moderately to highly sensitive viewing positions; and
- Night lighting would result in glare conditions affecting nearby residences.

4.11.5 Impact Analysis and Mitigation

The visual resources assessment focused on identifying potentially significant impacts, with the analysis directed toward public views in which the Project would be most visible.

There will be no changes to platform Holly that would be visible to the public. Due to the significant distance from shore (approximately two miles), any changes would not be noticeable to any visually sensitive points, and thus there would be no impacts to visual resources due to changes on Platform Holly.

Accidental spills could occur at or near the EOF, Platform Holly, or the EMT, the Barge *Jovalan* mooring, Barge *Jovalan* or the proposed Project pipeline. In general, the potential impacts resulting from an oil spill would tend to degrade the visual quality of the water and shoreline. The degree of impact is influenced by factors including, but not limited to, location, spill size, type of material spilled, prevailing wind and current conditions, the vulnerability and sensitivity of the shoreline, and effectiveness of early containment and cleanup efforts. However, visual impacts of an oil spill would be

temporary and short term and would, therefore, not produce impacts to visual resources.

Impact VR-1: Beneficial Visual Effects from the Removal of the EMT and Barge Mooring

The removal of industrial features, such as the EMT tanks, from the visually sensitive areas would improve aesthetic views in the area (Beneficial, Class IV).

Impact Discussion

Under the proposed Project, most of the EMT structures would be removed. The barge would no longer be present several times per month at the mooring. The mooring buoys would also be removed. The EMT was constructed in 1929 and the Barge *Jovalan* has been transporting crude oil from the terminal since the 1980s. Both the EMT and the Barge *Jovalan* have been part of the visual character of the Project area for many years. Currently, the tanks can be seen from many public view locations (see Figures 4.11-3 and 4.11-4) in the Project area. When the EMT facilities are removed as per the proposed Project, the views of the area would improve (compare Figures 4.11-4 to 4.11-9 and 4.11-5 to 4.11-10 below). This would result in a beneficial impact to an area with high visual sensitivity.

Impact VR-2: Visual Effects from equipment modifications at the EOF

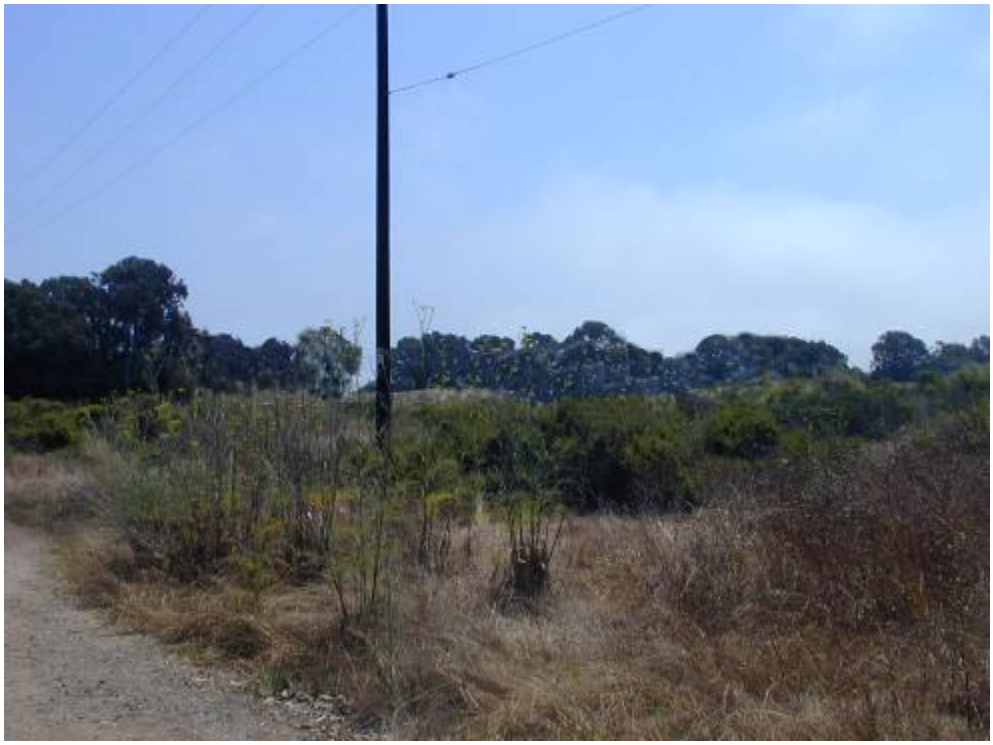
The proposed new structures would not be taller than the existing structures at the EOF, and thus would not decrease quality of views from the visually sensitive areas (Less than Significant, Class III).

Impact Discussion

The Project would include installation of four 20 feet tall adsorbent vessels for pressure swing adsorption (PSA). These equipment pieces would be installed next to the crude storage tanks that are taller than 20 feet and are located away from the beach in the middle of the facility. The storage tanks are not visible from the beach or golf course, and therefore the PSA towers would not be visible from those visually sensitive locations.

Figure 4.11-9
View from the Beach of EMT Site with Tanks Removed

Figure 4.11-10
View from the Abandoned Road West of EMT Site with Tanks Removed



The proposed Project involves removal of the exhaust stacks of the heater treaters. The visual effects of this would be beneficial as demonstrated by comparing Figures 4.11-1 and 4.11-11; and Figures 4.11-2 and 4.11-12.

The Project involves installation of a power generation system in the southeast corner of the EOF. The proposed power generation system would be approximately 10 feet tall with the stack height of the generators up to 20 feet tall. This height would be comparable to the height of other equipment at the facility, and to the stacks that would be removed during the Project. Because there would be no new tall features that are taller than the existing equipment, the visual impact of the new equipment would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Figure 4.11-11
"After Project" View of the EOF from the Beach

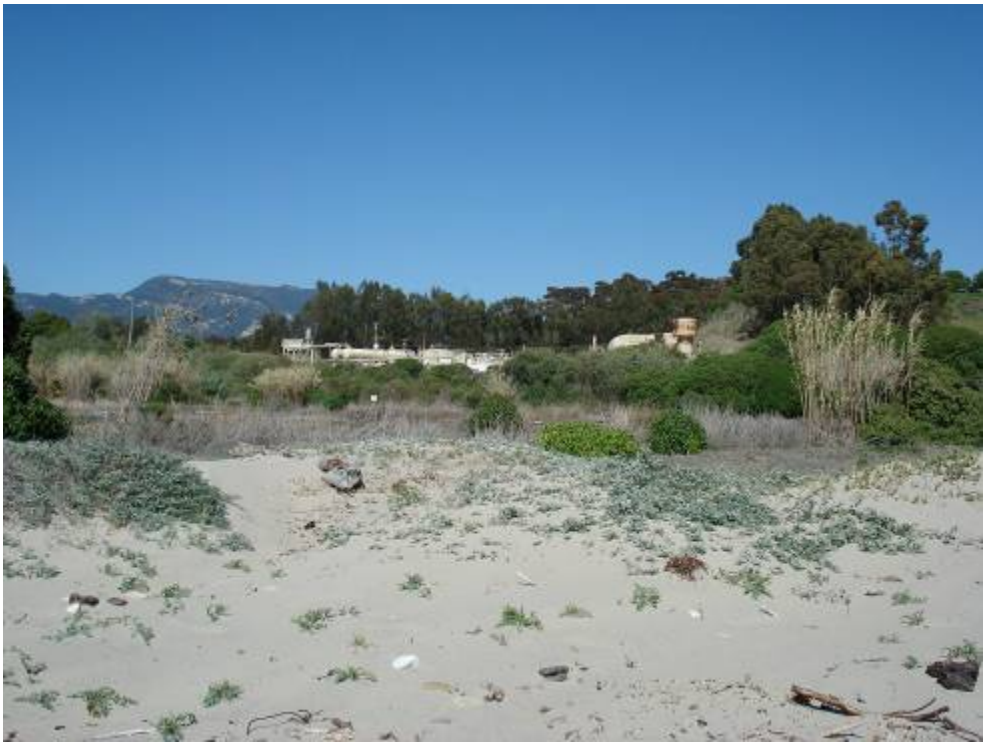
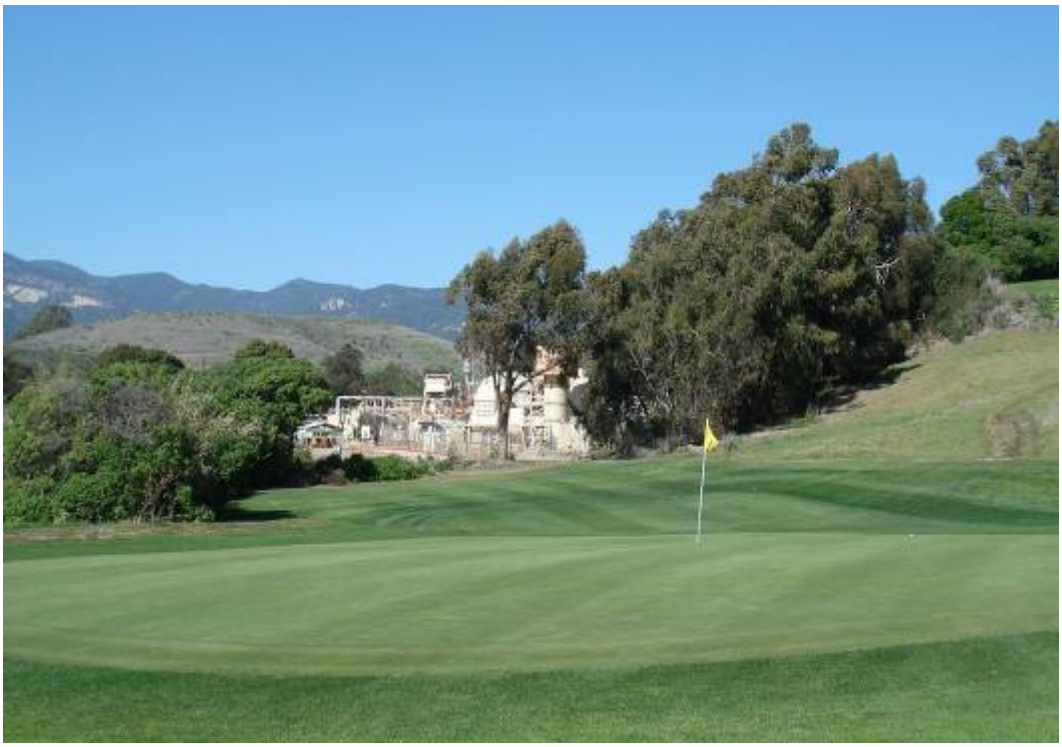


Figure 4.11-12
"After Project" View of EOF from Sandpiper Golf Course



Impact VR-3: Visual Effects from Pipeline Construction Activities

Construction activities and machinery would create visually negative impact (Less than Significant, Class III).

Impact Discussion

During construction of the pipeline, heavy machinery and materials would be present and visible from public roads and public use areas, such as Sandpiper Golf Course and El Capitan State Beach. Construction of the pipeline would be expected to take approximately four to six months. The short-term visual impact of construction would be adverse but not significant (Class III).

Impact VR-4: Visual Effects from Pipeline Installation

Installation of the pipeline would result in the removal of existing vegetation along the pipeline right-of-way, altering the visual character of the area (Potentially Significant, Class II).

Impact Discussion

Clearing and excavation to install the pipeline would occur along public and private roads, orchards, and other agricultural land. After completion of pipeline installation, the trench would be filled and the ground graded to pre-construction conditions. However, the strip along the pipeline route where vegetation was removed would remain visible from public roads, such as Highway 101. The removal of natural vegetation would alter the visual character of the landscape visible from public areas. This visual impact would be considered potentially significant (Class II).

Mitigation Measure

VR-4a. Revegetation of Pipeline Right of Way. The Applicant shall revegetate the cleared portion of the pipeline ROW with species that are biologically and visually compatible with the surroundings and continue with the appropriate watering schedule, if necessary, for establishing the permanent vegetative cover.

Rationale for Mitigation

Revegetating the cleared pipeline ROW would ensure that the visual impact is reduced in the shortest possible time. Waiting for natural revegetation to occur would prolong the visual impact, possibly for years, given the slow growth of the native vegetation of the area. In addition, non-native invasive species would most likely invade the cleared area first, further reducing the successful re-colonization of the ROW strip by native species. See mitigation measure Bio-11b.

Impact VR-5: Visual Effects from Station Installation

Installation of the station would result in the presence of an industrial feature amidst a rural viewshed, altering the visual character of the area (Less than Significant, Class III).

Impact Discussion

The connection station to the AACP would be located on the first coastal terrace west of LFC, at or in close proximity to the AACP. It would consist of a fenced area approximately 1,000 ft^2 (93 m^2) in size. The fence would be six feet high (two m) and made of slatted chain link construction. The valve operator handwheels, flow meter, and a pair of flanged connections would be located above grade.

The proposed station structure at the LFC would be visible from a rural road that is infrequently traveled and is not part of a scenic route. The views from the road are not considered sensitive. Because the views of the station are not sensitive, and because it is a small structure, the visual impact from installation of the station would be less than significant (Class III).

Impact VR-6: Visual Effects from Accidental Oil Spills at or near the facilities

An oil spill from Platform Holly, pipelines or the EOF could cause potential long-term adverse visual impacts from the oil spill and cleanup efforts (Significant, Class I).

Impact Discussion

This analysis considers the occurrence of accidental spills that could occur at or near the EOF, Platform Holly, or onshore pipeline. In general, the potential impacts resulting from such an occurrence would tend to degrade the visual quality of the water and shoreline. The degree of impact is influenced by factors including, but not limited to, location, spill size, type of material spilled, prevailing wind and current conditions, the vulnerability and sensitivity of the shoreline, and effectiveness of early containment and cleanup efforts.

Visually, oiling conditions could range from light oiling, which appears as a surface sheen, to heavy oiling, including floating lumps of tar. Heavy crude oil may disappear over a period of several days, with remaining heavy fractions floating at or near the surface in the form of mousse, tar balls, or mats, and lasting from several weeks to several months. Therefore, the presence of oil on the water would change the color and, in heavier oiling, textural appearance of the water surface. Oil on shoreline surfaces or nearshore marsh areas would cover these surfaces with a brownish-blackish, gooey substance. Such oiling would result in a negative impression of the highly sensitive viewshed (Bell Canyon Creek and Tecolote Creek, Devereaux and Goleta Sloughs). According to the South Ellwood Field Emergency Action Plan and Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP), protection of these areas is a high priority. Public and Venoco response capabilities are described in detail in Section 4.8, Public Services.

The public would react negatively to oil spill and cleanup visual effects. Without rapid containment by immediate booming and cleanup, the visual effects of even a small spill of up to 10 bbls (1.6 m^3) can leave residual impacts.

Removal of the EMT, and subsequent elimination of the barge transportation of oil would reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic event leading to an oil spill, but such likelihood is increased with the proposed drilling at Platform Holly and treating the new production at the EOF (see Impact HM-3). The volume of potential oil spills would also decrease due to the elimination of the barge loading operations.

However, because as compared to the current operations, the likelihood of oil spills would increase with the Project (added drilling and potential onshore pipeline rupture), the visual impacts from spills and cleanup efforts are considered *significant* (Class I).

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of those measures identified in Sections 4.2, Hazards and Hazardous Materials; 4.4, Hydrology, Water Resources, and Water Quality; and 4.5, Biological Resources, for contingency planning and spill response would be required.

Rationale for Mitigation

The measures presented in the above-mentioned sections provide improved oil spill capabilities, oil spill containment measures, and protection of resources.

Residual Impacts

Because the likelihood of oil spills and potential spill volumes associated with the Project, impacts to the visual environment are considered significant (Class I).

Table 4.11-3
Summary of Visual Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact (Is)	Impact Class	Mitigation Measures
VR-1: Beneficial Visual Effects from the Removal of the EMT and Barge Mooring.	Class IV	None Required.
VR-2: Visual Effects from Installation of new structures at the EOF.	Class III	None Required.
VR-3: Visual Effects from Pipeline Construction Activities .	Class III	None Required.
VR-4: Visual Effects from Pipeline Installation.	Class II	**VR-4a.** Revegetation of Pipeline Right of Way.
VR-5: Visual Effects from Station Installation.	Class III	None Required.
VR-6: Visual Effects from an Oil Spill.	Class I	See Hazardous Materials, Biology and Water Resources.

Extension of Life Impact

The Applicant has stated that the proposed Project would not increase the life of the existing South Ellwood Field Facilities, which is currently defined by the operational life of Platform Holly until 2040, and would likely reduce the overall duration of oil and gas production from existing facilities due to more efficient extraction of the resource. However, it is possible that increased oil and gas production from new wells drilled into the existing and proposed leases, formations (Lower Sespe) and fault blocks (North Flank and Eagle Canyon) could produce economically viable resources for a longer-than-expected period and increase the life of the existing facilities. Therefore, the impacts identified in Table 4.11-3 have the potential to occur over a longer period than assumed for the proposed project, exacerbating potentially adverse impacts.

Increasing the project duration and exposure of facilities to potential hazards could result in an increased likelihood of an oil spill impacting visual resources and would be considered significant (Class I).

4.11.6 Impacts of Alternatives

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Applicant would not be drilling and producing more oil; the proposed pipeline would not be constructed; and the EMT would continue operation. Impacts **VR-1** through **VR-5** would not occur, since visual impacts/benefits would not occur from removal of the EMT and barge mooring, changes at the EOF, pipeline construction and installation, or station installation.

Currently, lease agreements for the operations of the EMT will expire in 2013 and/or 2016 (see Section 2.0, Project Description). It is assumed that, under the No Project Alternative, after the lease expirations, the Applicant would pursue alternative means of crude oil transport such as pipeline or truck transportation. The impacts of these transportation modes are described in the Venoco Ellwood EMT Lease Renewal Project Draft EIR (CSLC 2007). Any future crude oil transportation options would be subject to appropriate agency review and approval.

No EOF Modifications

Under this alternative, there would be no modifications at the EOF, and thus Impact **VR-2** would not occur. All other visual impacts would be the same as for the proposed Project.

Processing on Platform Holly

Platform Holly is sufficiently far from the beach that only boaters would be able to see any differences in the Platform appearance due to the new structures, and there would be no visual impact related to the changes at the platform.

Impacts **VR-1, VR-3, VR-4, VR-5** and **VR-6** would be the same as for the proposed Project and mitigation measure **VR-4a** would apply.

Impact VR-7: Visual Effects from EOF Equipment Removal

The removal of EOF equipment would enhance the visual character of the area (Beneficial, Class IV).

Impact Discussion

Under this alternative, equipment would be removed from the EOF. A plot plan of the EOF under this alternative is shown in Appendix C. Removal of the EOF equipment, particularly the equipment located close to the access road (the LOCAT equipment) and the crude treatment equipment located near the golf course, would substantially reduce the visual impacts of the EOF on the surrounding recreational areas, including the golf course and beach areas. Please see figures 4.11-13 and 4.11-14 in comparison to figures 4.11-3 and 4.11-2 respectively. This would be considered a beneficial (Class IV) impact.

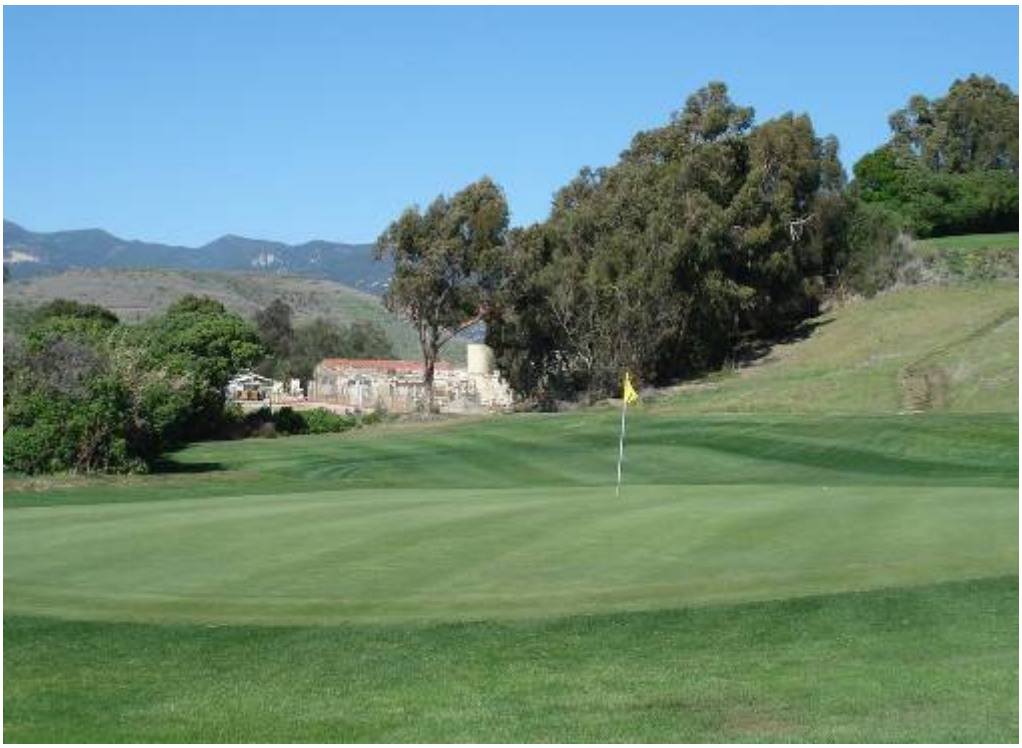
Las Flores Canyon Processing: Offshore Gas and Onshore Oil Pipeline

The majority of structures at the EOF, including the tall industrial structures visible from the beach near the EOF and the golf course, would be removed under this alternative, which would result in a visually beneficial impact similar to **VR-7**, but with greater benefits as more equipment would be removed. Impact **VR-2** would not apply.

Figure 4.11-13
Visual Simulation of EOF from Access Road with Platform Holly Alternative

1

Figure 4.11-14
Visual Simulation of EOF from Sandpiper Golf Course with Platform Holly Alternative



2

Impact **VR-1** would apply. Impact **VR-3** and **VR-4** would also apply for the onshore pipeline installation and for the offshore gas pipeline installation as the presence of the offshore equipment would temporarily affect ocean views. However, the offshore pipeline between Platform Holly and LFC facilities construction impacts would be short-term and would cease after the offshore pipeline is constructed and is, therefore, not considered to be a visual impact.

Impact **VR-5** would be eliminated because the tie-ins of the proposed pipelines would be done within the existing LFC oil and gas facilities, and no separate station would be required. Impact **VR-6** would also apply as there will still be an opportunity from an onshore pipeline spill to reach the ocean.

Las Flores Canyon Processing: Offshore Gas and Offshore Oil Pipeline

Under this alternative, impact **VR-1** would apply. Impacts from the onshore installation of the oil pipeline and the pipeline tie-in station would be eliminated (**VR-3** through **VR-5**). Impact **VR-6** would also apply as there will be an added opportunity from an offshore pipeline spill to reach the ocean. Also, there would be a beneficial impact from removal of the EOF structures similar to **VR-7**, but with greater benefits as more equipment would be removed. Impact **VR-2** would not be applicable under this alternative as equipment would be removed from the EOF, generating the beneficial impact **VR-7**.

4.11.7 Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis

There are no areas where visual impacts from the Project would be in the same viewshed as visual impacts from other projects in the area.

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